[Review of :] 'A Certain Text' : Close Reading and Textual Studies on Shakespeare and Others in Honor of Thomas Clayton / Linda Anderson and Janis Lull (eds.). - Newark : University of Delaware Press, 2002

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literature, especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for critical responses to published editions. While Murphy avows as his interest the foregrounding of "editions which helped to popularise Shakespeare as well as those which contributed to the advancement of the editorial tradition" (281), the book sustains an argument beyond its author's conception. Much more than a history of editing Shakespeare or of editions that popularize his plays, *Shakespeare in Print* demonstrates the degree to which "literary" texts—specifically Shakespearean literary texts—both manifest and are constrained by the culture that produces them.

Murphy would probably be hesitant to subscribe to Randall McLeod's radical view that "all editors are . . . inevitably prone to misreading and/or misrepresenting the texts which they edit" (266), but Murphy's history of Shakespeare editing demonstrates just that. The reinventions of Shakespearean text that he recounts derive from changes that have taken place over four hundred years in print culture. From F2's refinement of classical place names in what was still the English Renaissance to Pope's regularization of meter and line to Bowdler's morally improved edition to the early- and mid-twentieth-century editions built on the New Bibliography's scientific positivism to hypertext multi-texts that respond to recent editorial skepticism, the Shakespearean text has borne the burden of cultural ideology as has no other English text—except perhaps the Bible.

In a project as imposing and expansive as this, one might expect some unevenness. My frustration with this text, however, is more with its evenness. The command of the scholarly literature evident in this book is, to say the least, formidable. But Murphy's attempt to be fair-minded while accounting for so much scholarship has produced a scholarly narrative in which all things are too equal. In the case of the early quartos, for example, we learn that the variants may have come from revising, or they may have come from memorial reconstruction, or they may have come from acting versions. Instead of evaluating the tenets of an argument or the validity of evidence, Murphy concludes that "Perhaps the best—albeit unsatisfactory—explanation that can be provided for the divergent texts is that they offer variant conceptions of the plays, marked by complex theatrical and extra-theatrical histories and arriving into print by routes which are not amenable to a single explicatory narrative" (30). Elsewhere he offers a lively anecdote, admits its unlikelihood or the speculative nature of the theory of editing or critical comment with which it is associated, and then proceeds with his narrative as though the initial anecdote were established fact. At times Murphy's narrative takes on a life of its own that turned me, at least, into an unusually wary reader. Or perhaps I am more persuaded than Murphy by the work of scholars such as Michael Warren, Laurie E. Maguire, Randall McLeod, and Peter W. M. Blayney, who understand the ways in which printed books produced in the peculiar textual culture of late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century England defy the successive efforts that have been made to reform and regularize them. This said, *Shakespeare in Print*, especially its chronology, accounts for precisely these efforts in a manner that will enable editors and critics to discern one century's Shakespeare from that of another.

"A Certain Text": Close Reading and Textual Studies on Shakespeare and Others in Honor of Thomas Clayton. Edited by LINDA ANDERSON and JANIS LULL. Newark: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002. Pp. 205. $45.00 cloth.

Reviewed by LUKAS ERNE

"A Certain Text" has been published to honor Thomas Clayton, who may be best known to Shakespeareans as the editor of *The "Hamlet" First Published (Q1, 1603): Origins, Form, Intertextualities* (1992). In their introduction to this *Festschrift*, Linda Anderson, David Haley, and Janis Lull pay tribute to the scholarship and generosity of one whose passion as student and teacher of English literature has clearly proved infectious. Clayton's publications are listed in a chronological appendix compiled by David Haley.

Between introduction and appendix, the collection's ten essays share a sustained engagement with texts from a bibliographical or critical angle. By means of bibliographical detective work, Richard Proudfoot identifies physical evidence for a hitherto-unidentified edition of *Mucedorus*, extant in five leaves in an imperfect copy (owned by the Folger Shakespeare Library) of an undated edition, published between 1656 and 1663. Proudfoot's close analysis of the many early editions of *Mucedorus*, revealing that compositors gradually modernized the spelling rather than slavishly reproducing the spelling in their copytext, has broad implications for editors of early modern drama, reminding them "that we should not attach inappropriate significance to such matters as the spelling, punctuation, and capitalization of the First Folio—in particular, that we should avoid the enticing fancy that they are likely clues to Shakespearean nuance" (27). Accordingly, modern editors should continue what early modern compositors started, thoroughly modernizing the text, the aim being "the facilitating of intelligent reading and performance" (28). Proudfoot's incisive article is best read in the context of arguments over the relative merits of old-spelling versus modern-spelling editions. For Fredson Bowers, the latter was a necessary evil, whereas Stanley Wells, in *Modernizing Shakespeare's Spelling* (1979), advocated thorough and consistent modernization. The present article does much to provide a rationale for such a practice.

Linda Anderson examines the first quarto edition of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602). Grappling with the confusing "discrepancies between stage directions and characters who seem to be onstage" (65), she concludes that "the common assumption that characters who say nothing and are not referred to are not present in a scene, although it seems logical, may not be accurate" (66). Anderson's article corroborates Alan Dessen's argument that stage directions in early modern playbooks provide us with a very imperfect record of the action that was performed on stage. Jay L. Halio argues for the importance of the Induction to *Taming of the Shrew* as a clue to understanding the play. As Sly is made to believe that he is a lord who has finally been restored to his true identity, the induction prepares the audience for the play within, in which Katherina, Halio argues, is similarly restored to her true identity. While such a reading does make sense of the play's surprising structure, it relies on a view of identity which is, arguably, rather less performative than that presented by the play itself.

In the first of two reexaminations of famous passages in *Hamlet*, David Haley tries to solve what Harold Jenkins called "probably the most famous crux in Shakespeare,"[1] suggesting that Q2's reading—"the dram of eale / Doth all the noble substance of a doubt / To his owne scandle"—should be emended to "the dram of esill [vinegar] / Doth all the noble substance often sour / To his own scandal." While some may frown at the mere idea of trying to solve a textual puzzle which has busied dozens of critics and editors since Theobald in the eighteenth century, Haley's argument does have the virtue of addressing various kinds of evidence—textual, paleographical, contextual, and intertextual. In his reading of a different passage in the same play, Stephen Booth reveals to us, as he alone can, the dizzying complexities of Shakespeare's "rogue and peasant slave" soliloquy while reassuringly pointing out that these complexities are usually and "*properly* unobserved" (75). Perhaps the only blemish in this bravura performance is that not enough attention has been paid to *Hamlet*'s variant texts. Booth has much to say about the prince's line "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba," but a reader is left to wonder what Booth makes of Q2's "What's Hecuba to him, or he to her."

Joyce Sutphen's "'Of comfort and despair': A Shakespearean Compass" singles out four of Shakespeare's sonnets—5, 94, 116, and 129—which, unusually, are both general in topic and impersonal in not addressing a specific audience. The four sonnets, Sutphen argues, form two contrasting pairs, meditating on two subjects central to the sequence—beauty and love—with each pair giving "a best and worst case scenario" (119). Sutphen wisely refrains from asserting that Shakespeare must have intended this symmetrical arrangement.

While David Haley, Stephen Booth, and Joyce Sutphen perform close readings and Richard Proudfoot and Linda Anderson are interested in textual studies and editing, Janis Lull brings the two together. Focusing on the short scene that opens the final act of *Richard III*, Lull illustrates how detailed critical response, and, correspondingly, meticulous annotation in an edition, can expand our understanding of the play. This leads her to argue that, "Far from having too many editions of Shakespeare's works, we may have too few, and the ones we have may be too much alike" (51). What we may need, Lull maintains, are "more specialized editions" (51) which give more space to one kind of annotation—"notes devoted exclusively to sources and contemporary documents, for example" (51)—than the many "general-purpose editions" (52) can afford to do.

The collection ends with three non-Shakespearean essays that mirror Thomas Clayton's interests beyond Shakespeare, in particular in the lyric poetry of the English Renaissance. Achsah Guiborry establishes the importance of the Old Testament for Herrick's *Hesperides*; D. M. Hooley goes against the traditional dismissal of Jonson's translations of Horace; and Anatoly Liberman, in an article on Germanic etymology and legend, argues that dwarves did not acquire their diminutive stature until around the year 600. As these contributions make abundantly clear, this collection does not attempt to present a coherent argument or to advance our knowledge in one specific

[1] Harold Jenkins, ed., The Arden Shakespeare *Hamlet* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982), 449.

area. Such is not its purpose. What holds *"A Certain Text"* together is the person it honors, his research interests, and the methodology with which he has pursued his research, notably textual studies and close reading. Not everyone will agree with the editors' advocacy of "historical philology, from which English studies arose a century ago," or with their regret at the current "collapse [of] the distinction between traditional literature and other kinds of writings" (11); but their collection demonstrates that students of literature still have much to gain from careful attention to textual intricacies.

Shakespeare at Stratford: As You Like It. By ROBERT SMALLWOOD. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2003. Illus. Pp. xvi + 260. $25.99 paper.
Shakespeare at Stratford: King Richard III. By GILLIAN DAY. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002. Illus. Pp. xiv + 259. $25.99 paper.
Shakespeare at Stratford: The Merchant of Venice. By MIRIAM GILBERT. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002. Illus. Pp. xvi + 183. $25.99 paper.
Shakespeare at Stratford: Romeo and Juliet. By RUSSELL JACKSON. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2003. Illus. Pp. xiv + 241. $25.99 paper.
Shakespeare at Stratford: The Winter's Tale. By PATRICIA E. TATSPAUGH. London: Arden Shakespeare, 2002. Illus. Pp. xvi + 240. $25.99 paper.

Reviewed by MICHAEL D. FRIEDMAN

In March of 2003 a debate over the value of Arden's Shakespeare at Stratford series raged on *SHAKSPER: the Global Electronic Shakespeare Conference*.[1] Two charges were lodged against the series: first, that it does a disservice to performance history by ignoring landmark productions mounted by companies other than the RSC, and, second, that the authors waste their readers' time by devoting space to mediocre productions instead of concentrating solely on superior ones. After carefully examining the first five volumes in the series, I can state that, while these charges contain a grain of truth, the editorial decision to restrict focus to the RSC and to include significant treatment of all post-WWII Stratford productions does not compromise the volumes' overall scholarly merit. Each book does attempt to place productions inside the wider theatrical history of the play, both within and beyond the confines of Stratford. Moreover, the authors avoid giving the impression that all RSC productions are equally praiseworthy.

[1] The contributions to this lively exchange can be accessed through the search function of the SHAKSPER archives at <http://www.shaksper.net/search.html>.